751
2

Mr. *Bradford's*

SERMON

Preach'd before the

Lord Mayor, *&c.*

Novemb. 5th. 1704.

Buckingham Mayor.

Jovis ix die *Novembris*, 1704. *Annoq;* R.Rnæ *Annæ* Angliæ, &c. Tertio.

THis Court doth desire the Reverend Mr. Bradford to Print his Sermon Preached at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London, before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of this City; on Sunday the Fifth of this present Month of November.

Ashhurst.

BRITISH MUSEUM

694. g. 25. 2

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

Lord Mayor *and* Aldermen,

AND THE

Citizens of *LONDON*,

IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. *PAUL*,

On *Sunday*, *Novemb.* 5th. 1704.

By *Samuel Bradford*, Rector of St. *Mary le Bow*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

LONDON:

Printed for *Richd. Burrough*, at the *Sun* and *Half-Moon* in *Cornhill*, near the *Royal-Exchange*, 1704.

A

SERMON

PREACHED

BEFORE THE

Lord Mayor and Aldermen,

AND

Citizens of LONDON,

IN

Cathedral Church of St. PAUL,

On Sunday, November 5th, 1704.

BRITISH MUSEUM

By Samuel Bradford, Rector of St. Mary le Bow, and Chaplain in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

LONDON:

Printed for Richd. Sare, Esq; at the Sun and Half-Moon in Chancery-Lane, near the Royal-Exchange, 1704.

TO THE

Right Honourable

Sir *Owen Buckingham*,

LORD MAYOR

OF THE

City of *LONDON*,

AND THE

Court of Aldermen.

Right Honourable,

YOUR Order prefixt to this Sermon is a publick Teſtimony, that the Magiſtrates of this City do judge our laſt Deliverance on the 5th of November worthy to be commemorated together with the former. This Conſideration gives me ſome Satisfaction

in publiſhing this plain Diſcourſe, which otherwiſe had been an Act of pure Submiſſion and Obedience.

May all the Magiſtrates, and all the People of this Kingdom unanimouſly agree with you, in a grateful Memory of the late King, in a profound Veneration for her preſent Majeſty, and in a firm adherence to the Eſtabliſhment of the Proteſtant Succeſſion. Theſe I take to be, in our preſent Circumſtances, the ſureſt Teſts of a Man that loves his Country, and underſtands its true Intereſt; and notwithſtanding all our other unhappy Differences, if we can unite in theſe, we may hope, by God's Bleſſing, to ſee our Enemies diſappointed, our Religion and Laws ſecur'd,

ſecur'd, the eſtabliſh'd Church flouriſh, the Kingdom in general, and this City in particular in a ſafe and proſperous Condition, all which are the hearty Wiſhes and Prayers of,

Right Honourable,

Your moſt faithful

and obedient Servant,

Samuel Bradford.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

secure'd, the establish'd Church, Honour, the Kingdom in general, and this City in particular in a safe and prosperous Condition, all which are the hearty Wishes and Prayers of,

Right Honourable,

Your most faithful

and obedient Servant,

Samuel Bradford.

A

A SERMON

Preach'd before the

Lord Mayor, &c.

Novemb. 5. 1704.

ESTHER IX. xx, xxi, xxii.

And Mordecai *wrote these Things, and sent Letters unto all the* Jews *that were in all the Provinces of the King* Ahasuerus, *both nigh and far; to stablish this among them, that they should keep the Fourteenth Day of the Month* Adar, *and the Fifteenth Day of the same Yearly; as the Days wherein the* Jews *rested from their Enemies, and the Month which was turned unto them from Sorrow to Joy, and from Mourning into a good Day; that they should make them Days of Feasting and Joy, and of sending Portions one to another, and Gifts to the Poor.*

BEsides the ordinary Solemnity of this Day, which as *Creatures* and *Christians* we constantly celebrate to the Praise of Almighty God as our *Creator* and *Redeemer*,

there is at preſent an additional Solemnity belonging to it, whereby as *Engliſhmen* and *Proteſtants* we praiſe the ſame God, as our great and merciful *Preſerver*. So that we may take up the Words
Pſal. 118. 24. of the *Pſalmiſt*, upon more Accounts than one, *This is the Day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.* And for doing thus we find both a Pattern and a Warrant in the Words which I have read, and that too in an Inſtance very ſuitable to our preſent Caſe.

After the *Jews* by the ſpecial Providence of God had been deliver'd from *Haman*'s Conſpiracy, the two Days following that on which they were to have been deſtroyed, were eſtabliſh'd as Days of ſolemn and perpetual Thankſgiving. According to which Example we of this Church and Nation do on this Day annually commemorate our wonderful Deliverance from a Conſpiracy of the like Nature.

We indeed celebrate but one Day, inſtead of their Two: But it is a Day remarkable for a double Deliverance. I ſay, a *double* Deliverance. For God forbid that when we commemorate that in our Father's Days, we ſhould be ſo ungrateful and diſingenuous as to paſs over that in our own; that when we call to mind that of which we have heard only, we ſhould forget that which our own Eyes have ſeen. God forbid, that after the ſolemn Acknowledgements which we have been now making of both, in our Prayers to Almighty God, we ſhould omit the mention of either in our Diſcourſes upon this Occaſion. 'Twould be an unpardonable fault, I am ſure, in this Place,

and

and before this Aſſembly; in the Cathedral Church, and the in preſence of the Magiſtrates of this *Proteſtant* City.

Had it not been for the later, as well as the former of theſe Deliverances, we have too much Reaſon to believe, that inſtead of the *Offices* of the Church of *England*, thoſe of the Church of *Rome* had been now celebrating in this ſacred Place: that inſtead of the intelligible and rational Prayers and Praiſes, which we have been Offering up to the great Father of all, in the Name of his only begotten Son, in a Language which we all underſtand, there would have been blind and Superſtitious Devotions paid to other Beings beſide the only true God, in other Names than that of the only Mediator between God and Man, and in a Language foreign and unknown to the greater Part of the Aſſembly: that inſtead of the Holy Euchariſt, to be adminiſter'd, according to our Saviour's Inſtitution, in both kinds to all devout Communicants, here would have been the idolatrous Sacrifice of the *Maſs*, the expoſing and adoring of a Wafer, for the Son of God, our bleſſed Lord and Saviour: that the Enſign of Authority, the Sword of Juſtice, which we behold yonder, would have been either excluded from this Place, or (which is more likely) brought hither and attended by Magiſtrates of another Religion, and another Spirit: finally, that inſtead of our giving Thanks to God for the Preſervation of our Laws and our Religion, this very Day might have been here ſpent in ſinging *Te Deum* for the Deſtruction of both.

But I leave this Digreſſion, and return to my Text.

The Words are plain, and need no Comment, unleſs it be juſt to take notice, that the Month *Adar* here mention'd was the twelfth and laſt Month of the *Jews* Eccleſiaſtical Year, anſwering partly to *February*, partly to *March* in our *Calender*. On the thirteenth Day of that Month, that is at the latter end of *February* with us, their Deſtruction had been deſign'd; but the *Jews* being authorized to ſtand in their own Defence did ſo, in the Royal City of *Shuſhan*, both on that and the following Day, and reſted from their Enemies on the Fifteenth; but the other *Jews* throughout the Provinces defended themſelves and fell upon their Enemies on the thirteenth Day only, and reſted on the fourteenth; ſo that the two Days, on which both the one and the other were actually freed from the aſſault and fear of thoſe who had deſign'd their Deſtruction, were the Days eſtabliſh'd for their anniverſary rejoycing.

But to paſs over this; there are two Things which may be proper to be done in diſcourſing on theſe Words.

Firſt, To take a view of the Reaſons aſſign'd in the Text, for eſtabliſhing the Obſervation of the Days there mention'd; and to ſhew, as I go along, that we have the like good Reaſons for ſolemnizing this Day.

Secondly, To conſider farther the Manner in which the *Jews* are here directed to obſerve their Feſtival;

Feſtival; and at the ſame Time to ſhew how we ought to obſerve ours.

Firſt, To take a view of the Reaſons here aſſign'd for the eſtabliſhing the Obſervation of the Days mention'd in the Text.

The Words are theſe; *As the Days wherein the* Jews *reſted from their Enemies, and the Month which was turned unto them from Sorrow to Joy, and from Mourning into a good,* (that is a Feſtival) *Day.* This was in general the Reaſon of their Feſtival. But that we may be the more thorowly ſenſible of the Grounds of their rejoycing, and the better compare the cauſes of our Joy with their's, we may conſider theſe four Particulars in their Deliverance.

1*ſt*. They were deliver'd from the entire Extirpation of themſelves and their Religion out of the Dominions of the *Perſian* King.

2*d*. The Deſtruction with which they were threaten'd was in all human appearance inevitable.

3*ly*. The *Jews* might plainly diſcern a ſpecial Hand of God in the Deliverance which was granted them.

4*ly*. As this was a ſignal Inſtance of God's ſpecial Favour towards them, ſo it was but one Inſtance amongſt many others which they continually had from one Generation to another.

1*ſt*. They

1*st*. They were deliver'd from the entire Extirpation of themſelves and their Religion out of the Dominions of the *Perſian* King, that is, out of the moſt conſiderable Part of the then known World.

They had indeed before this obtain'd the Liberty of returning into their own Country: But ſtill there were great Numbers of them that ſtay'd behind, both of ſuch as had been carried Captive by the King of *Aſſyria* firſt, and the King of *Babylon* afterwards, and theſe were now all condemn'd to a general Maſſacre. Nor is it unlikely, that the Perſecution would ſoon have followed and overtaken them in their own Country, and have cut off thoſe that had been permitted to return thither; for the Spirit of Perſecution once excited is apt to be implacable. Their civil Liberties were loſt long before; for they were Strangers and Captives in a foreign Country, under an abſolute and deſpotick Power: But they had their Lives and their Religion yet left. For the *Perſian* Kings had not learnt the way of ſending their armed Miſſionaries to convert all their Subjects to the Religion of their King. Whilſt they were thought worthy to live, their Religion was left to their own Choice. But now upon a falſe Suggeſtion and Accuſation their Lives and their Religion were ſentenc'd together to a total Extirpation.

And if we reflect upon our own Deliverances, we ſhall find that they carry a fair reſemblance to this of the *Jews*. The Conſpiracy both in our Father's Days and our own was deſign'd for the extir-

extirpating the Profession of our Religion out of this Kingdom. 'Tis true, *they* also call'd themselves Christians, that were engag'd in this enterprize; the greater was their shame, and the more just their Condemnation. That the idolatrous *Persians* should be perswaded to root out the Religion of the *Jews*, together with it's Professors, is not so great a wonder: But that such as own the Religion of *Jesus Christ*, should express so implacable an hatred against the Professors of the same Religion which they themselves own, only because it is purged from the Errors and Corruptions that had defac'd it, and profess'd according to its original Institution, this is beyond measure Scandalous. There were indeed other *Protestant* Churches abroad, besides that which was here establish'd, which might possibly have escap'd, if this had been ruin'd: But as this has been always justly reputed the bulwark and support of all the rest, so by ruining this, they reasonably thought to have gone very far towards the ruining of all.

And as the designing such an end was a reproach to the Christian Name, so the means whereby they propos'd to attain it, was sufficient to bring a Scandal upon humane Nature it self, I mean particularly in the former Instance of the Day; namely, when according to the Words of our *Office*, *The King, the Queen, the Prince, and all the Royal Branches, with the Nobility, Clergy and Commons of this Realm then assembled in Parliament, were by Popish Treachery appointed as sheep to the slaughter, in a most barba-*

rous

rous and ſavage Manner, beyond the Example of former Ages; after which Expreſſion of the matter of Fact in plain and juſt Terms, there is neither need nor room for any farther Aggravation. Only we may adde to it the Conſideration of the inexpreſſible Diſorder and Confuſion which would neceſſarily have attended ſuch a Blow, throughout the whole Kingdom, which how or when it would have ended God only knoweth.

In the latter Inſtance of the Day, the End was the ſame, tho' the means were different. The rooting out *the Northern Hereſie* was the thing aim'd at; and ſince our Church and State are incorporated one with the other, and our Religion cloſely link'd with our Laws and civil Liberties, the ruining of the latter was deſign'd as a ſtep to the Deſtruction of the former. And conſidering the low Condition to which the Liberties of all *Europe*, and the Reform'd Religion abroad were reduc'd at that Time, we may juſtly eſteem our Deliverance, not as ours only, but as the ſaving the remaining Liberties of all this Part of the World, and the ſecuring of the Proteſtant Intereſt abroad as well as at home.

If any one after this can be found ſo devoid of good Senſe, as to undervalue ſuch a Salvation as this, let him but reflect a little upon the Condition of Mankind, where *arbitrary Power* and *Popery* prevail. Would he be in good earneſt contented to exchange the Liberty and the Security which we enjoy under good Laws, for a *Turkiſh* or a *French* Slavery? Is he indifferent between the Profeſſion of the ancient Apoſtolical Chriſti-

anity,

anity, and that of the preſent *Roman* Church? Is he reconcil'd to the Methods of the *Inquiſition*, or of the *Dragoonish Miſſionaries*, for the illuminating Mens underſtandings, and convincing their Judgments? Would he be willing to ſubſcribe and profeſs all the Errors of that corrupt Church, and to comply with their idolatrous Practices; or elſe to ſubmit to the miſerable Choice of being a Priſoner or a Galley-Slave in his own Country, or an Exile or Fugitive out of it? Nay not to have even that choice left him; but to be compell'd either to violate his Conſcience, or to be at the mercy of his cruel Enemies? If this be his caſe, 'tis not worth the while to diſpute with him. And can any Man in his Conſcience believe, that we were not before our late Deliverance in imminent danger of being reduc'd to ſuch a State? If he can, I deſpair of offering any new Arguments that may convince ſuch a Man. He muſt give leave to thoſe who are otherwiſe perſuaded to aſſign the Reaſon of the Text for our preſent Rejoycing; *This was the Day wherein we reſted from our Enemies, and the Month which was turned from Sorrow to Joy, and from Mourning into a good Day.*

We did not indeed *reſt from our Enemies* altogether as the *Jews* did, after having ſlain eight Hundred of them in *Shuſhan*, and no leſs than ſeventy five Thouſand in the Provinces, within the ſpace of two Days. No; in the former inſtance of our Deliverance, there were only a very few neceſſary Executions of reſolv'd and obſtinate Criminals; and in the latter (as we all well remember)

Mercy almoſt excluded the exerciſe of a legal Juſtice. But ſuch is the happy Difference between the *Jewiſh* and the *Chriſtian* Diſpenſation; and ſuch likewiſe between the Spirit of *Proteſtants*, and *Papiſts*. May we always thus *reſt from our* Enemies, not from the ſlaughter and deſtruction of them; but rather from their attempts to deſtroy and ruine us.

2*ly*. Another particular in the Deliverance of the *Jews* was, that the Deſtruction with which they had been threatned was in all humane Appearance inevitable.

Haman had caſt Lots for *a lucky Day* on which his enterprize might be put in Execution, and the Day was accordingly appointed, as by the ſecret Direction of the Gods whom they worſhip'd, or the unalterable Determination of Fate. The Decree which was iſſued forth for the Extirpati-
Chap. 3. 12. on of the *Jews* was *written in the King's Name, and ſealed with the King's Ring*, which, as the King himſelf intimates to *Eſther* upon her Interceſ-
Chap. 8. 8. ſion with him, render'd it *irreverſible*. It was moreover diſpatch'd by expreſſes to the Governours and to the People of the ſeveral Provinces, whereby the Caſe of the *Jews* ſeem'd utterly deſperate. Inſomuch that when afterwards the King was reſolv'd to do all that lay in his Power to ſave this miſerable People, he was forc'd to ſend forth another Decree written and ſigned in the ſame manner, not to reverſe the former, but inſtead thereof to enable the *Jews* by Royal Licenſe and Authority to ſtand in their own Defence, by

which

which means they had a narrow escape contrary to all humane Expectation.

And so had we. The first Conspiracy of this Day was hatch'd we know in the thickest Darkness; the Conspirators bound to secrecy by the most sacred Ties; the design carried on to the very point of Execution; the time very near at Hand; and little more was wanting than setting Fire to the Train.

As for our later Danger, it was not indeed so much in the Dark. No, we were running into it in broad Day-light, and with our Eyes open; but the difficulty of escaping was no less considerable. We had an unhappy Prince zealously engag'd in promoting the *Romish* Religion, and abundance of circumstances, easily remembred by most of us, had pav'd the way for effecting his Design. The very Conservators of our Laws, Men at that Time chosen out for the purpose, had given Judgment in its favour. There was at a little distance, on the other side of the Water, a powerful Prince ready and heartily willing to encourage the work in our Country, which he had so successfully carried on in his own. We were at home very much restrain'd by Principles of a just Loyalty; and it may be some amongst us too much entangled by some mistaken Notions, which in Opposition to a contrary extreme they had taken up and too eagerly defended; and others, who were not suspected of being under any such restraint, were obliged and flatter'd by an illegal Indulgence, and other plausible Pretences. And from abroad we had but small hopes of an assi-

ſtance powerful enough to divert the impending Storm. So that we might in both caſes cry out with the Pſalmiſt, *Our Soul is eſcaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler. The Snare is broken and we are eſcaped.* Again,

Pſalm 124. 7.

3*ly.* Another particular conſiderable in the *Jews* Deliverance was, that they might plainly diſcern a ſpecial Hand of God in it.

Every ſerious Chriſtian is well ſatisfied, that the Divine Providence runs through and diſpoſes all the Affairs of the Univerſe; but there are in ſome caſes viſible Marks of a ſpecial Providence, whereby things appear not to be left to the meer Order of Nature, and the courſe of ſecond Cauſes; but to be order'd by a Divine interpoſal, either by the Angelical Miniſters, the great Inſtruments of God's ſpecial Providence towards the Children of Men; or by God's own immediate influence upon the Minds and Hearts of Men; or by ſome other ſecret Methods not thought of by us Mortals. Thus it was in the inſtance of the Text. For Proof of which, we need only read this Book of *Eſther* carefully, in which we muſt needs obſerve many wonderful turns of Providence, for the defeating the Conſpiracy of *Haman*; ſuch as theſe. *Vaſhti* the Queen was for an Offence given to the King diſcarded, and thereby room made for the advancement of a poor *Jewiſh* Captive, that ſhe might be in readineſs and in a capacity of doing her People a ſignal Kindneſs, when occaſion ſhould ſerve. *Who knows* (ſays *Mordecai* afterwards in his Meſſage to her) *whether thou art come to the Kingdom for*

Chap. 4. 14.

ſuch

such a time as this? In the mean Time *Haman* is advanc'd to the King's ſpecial Favour, takes offence at *Mordecai*, and ſcorning to be reveng'd on him alone, reſolves to ruine his whole Nation. He accordingly accuſes them to the King, procures his Decree againſt them, upon the ſeeming Favour of *Eſther* inviting him to a Banquet with the King he grows ſtill more inſolent, preſuming to erect a Gallows for the hanging of *Mordecai* the next Day, little dreaming of the near Relation he ſtood in to the Queen. All thus far appears ſmooth on his ſide. But behold! *On that Night the King could not ſleep*, whereupon he commands the Book of the Records to be read to him; therein he lights on a remarkable Paſſage of a ſpecial Service done to him by *Mordecai*; upon which *Haman*, who was early attending at Court in hopes to have *Mordecai*'s Life granted him, is call'd in by the King, and drawn in unawares, vainly ſuppoſing himſelf to have been the Perſon meant, firſt to adjudge a very peculiar Honour to be done to the Man whom he deſpis'd and abhorr'd above all Men, and then to his great Mortification he himſelf order'd to ſee it perform'd. After which, he comes again to the Palace, to Feaſt, as he imagin'd, with the King and Queen: but contrary to all Expectation, *Eſther* accuſes him to his face before *Ahaſuerus*, upon which he is condemn'd to be immediately hang'd upon the ſame Gallows which he had provided for *Mordecai*, and *Eſther* proceeds to obtain the Decree before-mention'd, whereby her Nation is reſcued from the Deſtruction determin'd for them.

Chap. 6. 1.

Where

Where again 'tis observable that the very casting of Lots for a lucky Day, prov'd an happy Occasion of their Deliverance; for by that means from the going out of the Decree, which was in the first Month, to the thirteenth Day of the last Month, when it was to be put in Execution, there was a sufficient space of Time for *Mordecai*'s acquainting *Esther*, and for her interceding with the King, and for the issuing out a new Decree in Opposition to the former. So that the Lot was not directed by fate, nor by the Gods of the *Persians*, but by the God of *Israel* only.

Now what a train of Providences was there in this whole Matter, as so many evident Indications of the Counsel and Finger of God! especially considering, that all this was done in favour of an innocent People, falsly accus'd, and unjustly condemn'd, and those too the Professors of the Religion instituted by God himself. This was the case of the *Jews*.

And may we not in like manner say, that it was our Case also? The manner in which the first Conspiracy was detected seems little less than miraculous; it was apparently a signal Instance of that secret Providence which guides and over-rules the Affairs of Men.

That one, who was thought fit to be entrusted with so diabolical a Secret, should yet have so much humanity left, as to hazard the discovery of it, by sending a Letter to a Member of Parliament, to prevent his being in the way of Danger; that this Letter should be brought to the King; that he should be inspir'd (for I know not how else

else to express it,) to give a strange, but true Interpretation of some very odd and obscure Expressions in it; that thereupon search should be made in the very place where the Design was to be executed; that the Person appointed to set Fire to the Train should be seiz'd at the very entrance into the Place, and by that means both he and others brought to a Confession of the Crime, tho' generally without Remorse or Retractation!

And so again in the latter Case, when Matters were brought to Extremity, and we could hardly see whence any help could come, we had our *Esther* and our *Mordecai*, and they were mightily animated and supported to rescue us. Providence had long before laid a Train for our Salvation, by causing the then Princess to be married to another Branch of the Royal Stock, whereby an occasion and opportunity were administer'd to both of them in Conjunction, for the becoming in due Time the happy Instruments of our Deliverance. And altho' in a Time of Peace there was a well-appointed Army kept up amongst us, to prevent any such attempt, and very great difficulty and hazard in the undertaking, both here and from abroad, yet all things were so order'd by the Divine Providence; the Inclinations of the Prince and Princess, with those of the neighbouring State so dispos'd; the Hearts of the People of this Realm, of all Ranks, the Army it self not excepted, so united; the desires and hopes of those that lov'd their Country and their Religion on the one hand, and the Fears of our Enemies on the other hand so excited; the Winds, which

together

together with the Hearts of Men are in the hands of God, ſo turn'd, as to give a ſpeedy and a happy Iſſue to the glorious Undertaking.

And all this again in defence of a People, who, howſoever obnoxious to Almighty God, yet had deſerv'd better uſage from thoſe Men that conſpir'd againſt their welfare; and alſo in maintenance of God's true Religion, both in this and the other reformed Churches.

And yet to add one Circumſtance more; the coming of our Deliverer was providentially order'd on the very ſame Day, on which our Fathers had been ſo miraculouſly ſav'd from the Conſpiracy of the ſame ſort of Enemies; as if Almighty God would thereby invite us more carefully to obſerve his Hand in it. So that we may juſtly ſay, *This* was *the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our Eyes*; and again, *If it had not been the Lord, who was on our ſide, when Men roſe up againſt us; then they had ſwallow'd us up quick, when their Wrath was kindled againſt us; then the Waters had overwhelm'd us, the Stream had gone over our Soul; then the proud Waters had gone over our Soul, Our help is in the Name of the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth.*

Pſal. 118. 24.
Pſal. 124. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8.

4*ly.* There is yet one particular more, which I mention'd as obſervable in this Deliverance of the *Jews*, viz, That as it was a ſignal Inſtance of God's ſpecial Favour towards them, ſo it was but one amongſt many others, which were given them from one Generation to another. For they had been the conſtant charge of the Divine Providence

down

down from *Abraham* and the other Patriarchs to their Deliverance from *Egypt*, and from that to this other Deliverance in the Days of *Eſther*.

And in like manner we may with great Thankfulneſs obſerve, how by the Divine Providence the Laws and Liberties of our Countrey have been handed down to us, through all the ſeveral Revolutions of paſt Ages; A Priviledge which but few of our Neighbours can at preſent glory in: and that ever ſince the Reformation in this Kingdom, as often as our Enemies of the *Romiſh* Faction have made any vigorous Attempt to introduce their Superſtition, ſo often hath Providence kindly and ſeaſonably interpos'd, to the diſappointment of their Devices. It were eaſie to give particular Inſtances; but as the time will not allow it, ſo your Memories will eaſily ſave me that Labour. I therefore proceed to the other General Head, which I propos'd, *viz.*

Secondly, To conſider the manner in which the *Jews* are here directed to obſerve their Feſtival, and at the ſame time to ſhew how we ought to Obſerve ours.

Now as to this, the Text tells us, that they were *to make them Days of Feaſting and Joy, and of ſending Portions one to another, and Gifts to the Poor*. Nor was this all; but they did moreover celebrate the Feaſt of *Purim*, as they did their other Feſtivals, by coming firſt to the Houſe of God, and there offering up their devout Praiſes to the great Author of all their Bleſſings. We have a compleat Deſcription of the way of Solemnizing

Deut. 16.11. a *Jewish* Festival in that Passage of *Moses*; *Thou shalt rejoyce before the Lord thy God, thou, and thy Son, and thy Daughter, and thy Man-servant, and thy Maid-servant, and the* Levite *that is within thy Gates, and the Stranger, and the Fatherless, and the Widow, that are among you, in the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to place his Name there.* The Solemnity consisted of three Parts, of which one may be call'd the *Natural*, another the *Religious*, and a third the *Charitable* Part.

As to our Imitation of them in the *Natural* Part, namely, in Feasting, Rejoycing, and Congratulating with each other upon such Occasions, there needs nothing to be said, but only by way of Admonition, that we always do these things with the Sobriety and Moderation which become Christians; and especially on such a Day as this, which is upon other Accounts consecrated to the Worship and Service of Almighty God and our Redeemer, taking Care that we admit no external Expressions of our Joy, which are unfit to accompany or to attend the Devotion and Service of the Day.

As to that which is strictly speaking the *Religious* Part, we have been now performing it; and it very well becomes us to render our devout and solemn Thanks to Almighty God as our Great Patron and Benefactor. Whosoever have been the Instruments, or whatsoever the Means of our Deliverances, God is ever to be own'd as the Prime Author of them; and this more especially, when he hath so clearly manifested his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness on our behalf.

As to the *Charitable* part of our Feſtival, we ſhould always reckon it eſſential to the Solemnity. When we are our ſelves rejoycing, congratulating with each other, and rendring our Thanks to God for his Special Favours to us, we ſhould never forget our Obligation on ſuch Occaſions to make the Hearts of the Poor, the Fatherleſs, and the Widow to rejoyce, and to bleſs God with us and for us.

And particularly on this Occaſion, there is one Exerciſe of our Charity, which we cannot omit without being very Criminal; I mean, the offering up our earneſt Supplications to Almighty God for thoſe our Brethren of the Reformed Religion, who ſuffer very ſeverely under the Power of thoſe cruel Enemies from whom we have been deliver'd. What a Senſe would they have of the Bleſſings we Enjoy! With what Gratitude to God and his Inſtruments would they celebrate this Feſtival, if they had the ſame Reaſon and the ſame Opportunity for doing it, that we now have! Now for as much as they are Fellow-Members of the ſame Body with us, it well becomes us to have a deep Senſe of their Condition, and from the Conſideration of God's Goodneſs to our ſelves, to be excited the more earneſtly to pray for them, that they alſo may be made Partakers of our Joy.

But is there yet any thing farther neceſſary to render our Thankfulneſs compleat, after we have fulfill'd the Duties of the Day?

Yes certainly, if our Gratitude to God be Real, and our Joy upon this Occaſion Hearty, we ſhall go on to Expreſs our Senſe of theſe great Deliverances in the two ways following.

First, We ſhall live as it becomes thoſe who have receiv'd ſuch great Favours from the Hands of
Pſal. 50. 23. the Almighty. *Whoſo offereth Praiſe glorifieth me*, ſaith God, *and to him that ordereth his Converſation aright, will I ſhew my Salvation.* Ordering our Converſations aright, is the moſt Subſtantial Part of our Praiſe, and the ſureſt way to obtain farther Salvation from God. Have we been thanking God, that our Laws and Liberties have been preſerv'd to us? It becomes all of us then to exerciſe that Juſtice and Equity towards each other, which are the great end of all righteous Laws; and it is fit for thoſe who have Authority, to ſee that Truth and Righteouſneſs be maintain'd and encourag'd, and that Vice and Immorality be diſcountenanc'd and puniſh'd as the Laws enjoin. It Concerns us to uſe our Liberties with Thankfulneſs and Modeſty, with Chearfulneſs and Sobriety; as free from Slavery, but remembring that we are Subject to the Laws of God and of our Country. Have we been bleſſing God for the Preſervation of our Church, and the Eſtabliſhment of true Religion among us? Then let our Practices exceed thoſe of the Members of the Church of *Rome*, as much as our Principles exceed theirs. Let the Word of God, which we have the free Uſe of both in Publick and Private, become the Rule of our Tempers and Actions, as well as the Standard of our Profeſſion. Let our Lives be as unblameable as our Faith is; and our Worſhip as devout and ſerious, as regular and conſtant, as it is pure and uncorrupted. Let us finally ſo demean our ſelves, as to recommend the Reform'd Profeſſion to

 thoſe

those who are at present through Prejudice and Mistake Enemies to it, by shewing them the Power it has upon us, to produce all the Virtues of a Christian Life.

Secondly, If our Gratitude and our Joy on this Day be Real, we shall shew our Zeal upon all Occasions for the maintaining and securing the inestimable Blessings which have been hitherto continued to us, and for transmitting them also to Posterity.

A legal Government, and the Establishment of reform'd Christianity, are two the most valuable Blessings that a Kingdom can enjoy, and which we cannot, by all lawful Means, too carefully preserve. As it has been all along the Temper of this Nation to contend earnestly for the Former; So from our first Reformation till a considerable time after the former Deliverance which we are now commemorating, there was a warm Zeal in all the Protestants of this Kingdom, for maintaining the latter also. They seem to have had a quick Sense of, and an Ingenuous Gratitude for every Deliverance they receiv'd from the *Romish* Party. Of this we have one standing Evidence to this Day, *viz.* The many anniversary Sermons, which by the Appointment of our pious Ancestors are preach'd in this City, in Commemoration of three signal Dispensations of Providence in Favour of the Reformation, *viz.* On the Day of Queen *Elizabeth*'s Accession to the Crown; at the Season when we were deliver'd from the *Spanish* Invasion; and on this Day, on which we were sav'd from the Gunpowder Conspiracy. And 'tis Strange, that our late Deliverance should seem to have cool'd the Zeal, and to have

abated

abated the Gratitude of ſome Men. 'Tis in Truth a Reproach to our Nation, that there ſhould be any found in it, who, whilſt they call themſelves *Proteſtants* and *Engliſhmen*, diſcover ſo much Diſſatisfaction with our late Deliverance, and ſo little Concern for eſtabliſhing the Bleſſings which we receiv'd thereby, as to caſt contempt on the Memory of him, whom God honour'd to be his glorious Inſtrument for our Good. As we hardly meet with an Inſtance parallel to this in the Hiſtory of former times; ſo the Account of it will not be eaſily credible to future Generations. The Ungrateful *Jews* indeed, frequently murmur'd againſt *Moſes* in his Life-time; but we read not of any that reproached him after his Death. No; He was ever mention'd with Honour, as the glorious Inſtrument of their Deliverance from *Egyptian* Bondage. And ſo, notwithſtanding the diſingenity of theſe Men, the Publick Acknowledgment made in our Churches upon this Occaſion, when we offer up *our unfeigned Thanks* to our *moſt Gracious God, for bringing his late Majeſty upon this Day, for the Deliverance of our Church and Nation from Popiſh Tyranny and Arbitrary Power*, I ſay, this Publick Acknowledgment will ſtand upon Record, as expreſſing the Senſe of our Church and Nation, when I hope time will have obliterated the Memory of ſuch Ingratitude.

Beſides all the other Advantages of the Revolution, we have, thanks be to God, two famous Inſtances of the Benefit which accrued to our Church and Nation thereby, neither of which we could have reaſonably hoped for but by this Means, *viz.*

viz. One, in our excellent Sovereign now reigning over us; and the other, in the Settlement of a Proteſtant Succeſſion.

Very conſpicuous was the Divine Goodneſs and Mercy to us, in preſerving ſuch a glorious Succeſſor to our late Prince of bleſſed Memory; One who reſolutely carrys on the ſame good Work which he began; who is the true Defender of our Faith and of our Laws, the Head of the Proteſtant Intereſt both at home and abroad, and the great Patroneſs of the Liberties of *Europe*. And Bleſſed be God, who hath given ſuch glorious Succeſs to her Arms, as may juſtly increaſe the Joy and Gratitude even of this Day.

Now if we would ſtill hope to ſee the Bleſſings we enjoy eſtabliſh'd, 'tis our Wiſdom and our Duty to unite under Her Majeſty in our Endeavours for the publick Safety. One of the moſt ſucceſsful Arts of our *Romiſh* Adverſaries has been to ſow the Seeds of Contention and Diviſion amongs us; of which we have had ſo large Experience, that one would think it ſhould be impoſſible for them any more to delude us this way. Our Intereſt certainly is to counter-work them, and to ſhew our ſelves as Zealous and Induſtrious for promoting Peace amongſt our ſelves, as they are to divide us. Would we be ſecure from their Attempts, in which they are reſtleſs and unwearied, we muſt all of us make it our Care to compoſe the Differences, and to make up the Breaches that are ſtill amongſt us, whether in Church or State; we muſt lay aſide all the odious Names of Diſtinction that have been too long uſed; we muſt forget our former Animoſities, and beware

of

entertaining New Jealouſies; we muſt diveſt our ſelves of all ſelfiſh Concern for our own private Intereſts, or the Intereſts of a Party, and contend only who ſhall beſt promote the Welfare of the Community.

French Power and *Engliſh Liberties* are things widely different; and ſo are *Popery* and the *Proteſtant Religion*; and our Zeal for the latter in Oppoſition to the former ſhould, at leaſt under our preſent Danger, cover all our ſmaller Diſagreements.

I conclude all with that excellent Prayer of our Church on this Occaſion, *That the devout Senſe of this repeated Mercy may renew and increaſe in us a Spirit of Love and Thankfulneſs to God, its only Author; a Spirit of peaceable Submiſſion and Obedience to our Gracious Sovereign; and a Spirit of fervent Zeal for our Holy Religion; that it may be Eſtabliſh'd a Bleſſing to us and our Poſterity; which God of his Great Mercy Grant for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, to whom, with the Father, and the Eternal Spirit, be Praiſe and Glory, now and for ever,* Amen.

FINIS.